1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02)1906 Toda

584 becomes older it is expected that the garment shall become larger and more valuable.

If any member of the girl's family should die it is expected that the boy's family shall on each occasion give a sum of eight annas or a rupee. This gift is called *tinkanik panm ittpimi*, or "we give a piece of money to the purse."

Formerly the boy's family had also to contribute one of the buffaloes killed at the funeral, but this custom is now obsolete. The contribution of buffaloes and money from the boy to his parents-in-law is called *pödri*. The boy has to take part in a ceremony at the funeral in which a cloth is laid on the dead body, and with this ceremony there is associated a further gift of one rupee, paid to the relatives of the dead person by the family of the boy who has married into the family of the deceased (see p. 358).

881 616 Certain ceremonies are performed shortly before the girl reaches the age of puberty. One is called *putkuli tâzâr ittiti*, or "mantle over he puts," in which a man belonging to the Tartharol if the girl is Teivali, and to the Teivaliol if she is Tarthar, comes in the day-time to the village of the girl and lying down beside her puts his mantle over her so that it covers both and remains there for a few minutes.

881 836 626 Fourteen or fifteen days later a man of strong physique, who may belong to either division and to any clan, except that of the girl, comes and stays in the village for one night and has intercourse with the girl. This must take place before puberty, and it seemed that there were few things regarded as more disgraceful than that this ceremony should be delayed till after this period. It might be a subject of reproach and abuse for the remainder of the woman's life, and it was even said that men might refuse to marry her if this ceremony had not been performed at the proper time.

583 It is usually some years later, when the girl is about fifteen or sixteen, that she joins her husband and goes to live with him at his village. The parents of the husband announce that they will fetch the girl on a certain day, which must be one of two or three days of the week,[1] different for each clan. The husband, accompanied by his father and a male

[1] The probable rule is that the day must not be a *madnel* or *palinel*.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

Tarthâl mand, rice is cooked for her in water. When a Tarthâl woman visits at a Têrthâl mand, she is permitted to enter into the mand, and food is cooked for her in buttermilk. The restrictions which are imposed on Têrthâl women are said to be due to the fact that on one occasion a Têrthâl woman, on a visit at a Tarthâl mand, folded up a cloth, and placed it under her putkûli as if it was a baby. When food was served, she asked for some for the child, and on receiving it, exhibited the cloth. The Tarthâls, not appreciating the mild joke, accordingly agreed to degrade all Têrthâl women. According to Dr. Rivers, "the fundamental feature of the social organisation is the division of the community into two perfectly distinct groups, the Tartharol and the Teivaliol [=Dêvalyâl of Breeks]. There is a certain amount of specialisation of function, certain grades of the priesthood being filled only by members of the Teivaliol. The Tartharol and Teivaliol are two endogamous divisions of the Toda people. Each of these primary divisions is sub-divided into a number of secondary divisions [clans]. These are exogamous. Each class possesses a group of villages, and takes its name from the chief of these villages, Etudmad. The Tartharol are divided into twelve clans, the Teivaliol into six clans or madol."

When a girl has reached the age of puberty, she goes through an initiatory ceremony, in which a Toda man of strong physique takes part. One of these splendid specimens of human muscularity was introduced to me on the occasion of a phonograph recital at the Paikâra bungalow.

Concerning the system of polyandry as carried out by the Todas, Dr. Rivers writes as follows. "The Todas have long been noted as a polyandrous people, and the institution of polyandry is still in full working order

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

586 Rivers says that a man may divorce his wife for only two reasons, namely, either that she is a fool or that she will not work. He adds, however, that illness of the husband has also sometimes been regarded as a ground for divorce (Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 525).

But from my field-work in the Nilgiris, I gathered that the only real reason for a man wanting to be legally separated from his wife, was that she had co-habited with a non-Toda. He would then take one of his male buffaloes, tie a coconut shell round its neck in the presence of the *noim* which he had called together for that purpose. He would next cut off his wife's hair, beat her publicly, and end up by driving her together with the buffalo back to the house of his parents-in-law. I never actually saw this happen, but was assured on good authority (Kanvarsathi, Ujar (48), Sriar (20), Öknarsh (8) and Piliar (52)) that this was how it was done.

[837] [684] [623] [115]

●881 616 Before Toda girls reach the age of puberty, before their first menses, two things have to take place. First the ceremony called *putkuli tazar utiti* ("cloak over he puts") is performed. In it, a man of the opposite moiety to that of the girl (Teivilkh if she be Tardharsh, and vice-versa), comes to the *mad* at which she lives, during the day, lies down beside her on the *ertülkh* of her *arsh* for a few minutes and puts his *putkuli* over both her and himself.

881 616 833 604 124 [114] A fortnight later, if a Tardharsh, she will have to be deflowered by a Teivilkh, and if a member of the latter, inferior, moiety, by somebody from the opposite one (Rivers has "a man of strong physique", which is not accurate enough, see *The Todas*, p. 503). It is looked upon as a great shame for a girl to start menstruating before this has been done, which reminds me of what Duarte Barbosa says about Nayar virgins (see above, p. 170). I was naturally most intrigued by this belief, and, as Rivers alludes only in passing to the custom and does not offer any explanation, I decided to try and find out for myself what the reason for it could possibly be.

Naturally this was no easy task, as people were too shy to speak about it, but I pressed Ujar (48) to speak for over a month, considering him to be the man, because of his age, standing and disposition towards me, the most liable to talk. I gave him presents such as a bag of rice, a buffalo calf and spectacles, but still he was reticent, and I could see that, although he wanted to confide the secret to me in return, he was afraid to do so. Finally I elucidated from him that his apprehension came from the fact that he feared that should he speak in the Nilgiris, the gods would wreak punishment upon him. I decided,

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

therefore, to take him right away, and on the 3rd of August, 1939, drove him down to the plains, near Mettupalaiyam, in order to question him far away from his hills.

I stopped at the side of the road when we had reached level ground, and, through Kanvarsathi – who was, incidentally, as curious as I to find out – requested him, now that we were out of *Terkish nor* (the land of Terkish), to speak. His answer was well worth the trouble I had taken, for he immediately replied, quite unexpectedly I must say, that unless this is done, "the maternal uncle of the girl will die".

I immediately pressed him for more. Why was it so, I asked, and how could such a thing have anything to do with the safety of the *muri*? He did not know, he said, it was just like that, and people had, of course, to guard themselves against this danger. To my next question as to what the maternal uncle could do to save himself if by any chance defloration had not taken place in this traditional way, he replied that he would still be safe if he could get hold of the girl and shave all her hair off.

This talk with Ujar (48) later led me to a number of psychoanalytical speculations in an attempt to make sense out of what he told me, and in the course of lectures on the subject to various specialized bodies, interesting discussions on this point have taken place. I shall give an account of these in the publication which I am planning for later, on the psychological findings of my research (see Introduction, p. 15).

Although the rules of endogamy within the two moieties of the Toda tribe, the Tardharsh and the Teivilkh, are very strictly observed, a regular system of concubinage and cicisbeism exists between them, organized as though to get round the difficulty. This is known as the *mokhthoditi* institution and it is an established feature of Toda social organization.

The origin of the custom, which is not restricted to inter-moiety cicisbeism and concubinage in practice, although it is so in principle, is said to be mythological. The god Kulinkarsh was the lover of the goddess Notirsh, without being married to her. The partners of the *mokhthoditi* are known respectively, the man as *mokhthodvaiol* ("the man who keeps the child"), and the woman as *sedvaitazmokh* ("the woman who joins the child"). It would probably be more correct to put these in the plural, since nothing theoretically really limits the number of persons to be joined in this way. In fact, however, the relation appears always to be between single individuals only.

There are two different ways in which the liaison is carried on.

To 595 562 881 WT, 881

and chattel of the men. She is looked down upon, considered as part of the property, as part of the household, and must pay obeisance to her husbands. She does this by bending down and putting her head under the feet of the husbands, which is the typical Toda salute of respect. There is an initiation ceremony very similar to the Tibetan one, in which the boys' and girls' hair is cut early and even one of the ears is pierced. However, here it differs from the Tibetan custom, in that it is the maternal uncle who does this, which is rather curious and may show some influence of a matrilineal, matriarchal nature.

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Particularly extraordinary among the Todas is the fact that no girl of the Thartar clan (the superior section of the Todas) is allowed to be married as a virgin. She has to be deflorated first by a member of the Teivil clan. This seemed to me to be so extraordinary that I decided to look into it a bit more closely. Teivil girls can marry as virgins, but the Thartar girls must be deflorated first by a Teivil before they can marry a Thartar. Naturally, that kind of thing is difficult to find out about, because the people are too shy to speak about it. When I finally got hold of an old Toda and asked him what the reason was, it took me at least a month to find out. I gave him a lot of presents, among other things a bag of rice and a calf buffalo, and still he would not speak. Finally, I found out that it was not that he was unwilling to do it despite the presents I had given him; on the contrary, he would have very much liked to tell me about it, but seemed to be scared to speak about it in the Toda area. He was afraid of the spirits and the Toda gods if he revealed so intimate a secret. Consequently, I decided to take him miles away, out of the Toda area, where his gods and spirits could not get hold of him. We drove at least 100 miles away from the Nilghiris before we stopped by the side of the road and I again asked him, "Why do you practice this custom?" His answer was very